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# Spice & Wolf

Vol. 9

PARENTAL ADVISORY
WARNING
EXPLICIT CONTENT

# SPICE & WOLF

## *Lawrence*

**A clever young merchant. Traveling in search of Holo's homeland of Yoitsu.**





## *Holo*

**Lawrence's traveling companion, a beautiful girl. Her true form is that of the wolf-god of the harvest.**



## *Col*

**A boy saved by Lawrence at the river checkpoint. A naive but clever lad.**



## *Eve*

**A mysterious merchant woman. Normally hides her face and dresses like a man.**

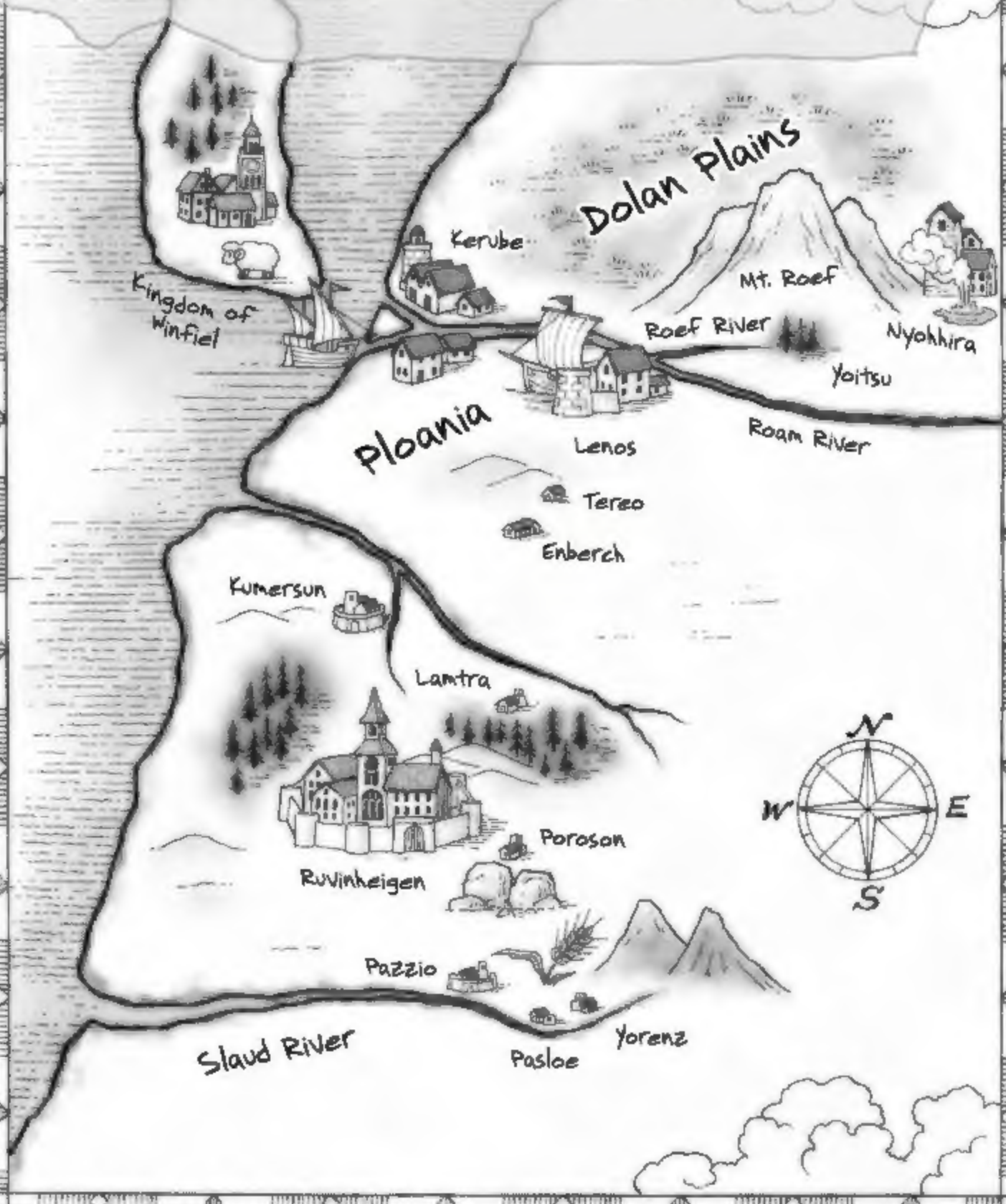


## *Kieman*

**The Kerube branch chief of the trade guild that counts Lawrence as one of its members. A cool-headed, canny businessman.**

# Introduction

In search of the forest of Yoitsu, Holo's homeland, Lawrence and Holo continue their travels. Avoiding an unstable situation in the town of Lenos, they proceed downriver toward the port town of Kerube. Along the way, they hear from a boatman about a forbidden book that tells of how to strip-mine a mountain bare. Lawrence and Holo decide to seek out the text to protect Yoitsu. Setting out to gather information in Kerube, Lawrence is approached by a certain merchant at the inn, and……?




Map Illustration: Hidetada Idemitsu

# SPICE & WOLF

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SPICE & WOLF

KRAFT? OR LAWRENCE?

IN BUSINESS, I USE LAWRENCE.

GYU (CINCH)

YOU CAN CALL ME EVE. I'M NONE TOO FOND OF "BOLAN."

I'M REALLY NOT THE QUIET TYPE.

IF ANYTHING, I'M RATHER TALKATIVE.

I'D PLANNED TO HIDE IT, IF I COULD...

HA HA HA!

HEH HEH!

I'M STARTING TO CHANGE MY IMPRESSION OF YOU.

AND QUITE COURTEOUS, IF I DO SAY SO MYSELF.

THOUGH YOU'RE NOT BAD-LOOKING.

MERCHANTS DON'T GET INFATUATED SO EASILY. SO IT'S NOT THAT.

MIGHT I ASK WHY YOU'VE CHOSEN ME FOR THIS PARTICULAR HONOR?

...IS QUITE SIMPLE. I JUST WANTED SOMEONE TO TALK TO.

THE REASON I GOT YOUR ATTENTION ...

SHE REMINDS ME OF HOLO, SOMEHOW.

YOU HAVE THE BOY TOO, BUT I'M GUESSING HE'S A RECENT ADDITION?

AH, THE CIRCUMSTANCES AROUND MY COMPANION ARE RATHER COMPLICATED...

I'VE NO INTENTION OF PRYING.

HE'S GOT A GOOD EYE FOR PEOPLE.

THE IMPORTANT THING...IS THAT OLD MAN AROLD LIKES YOU.

THAT AND YOUR CHARMING TRAVELING COMPANION.

THE THREE OF YOU SEEM WELL ACCUSTOMED TO TRAVEL AND AREN'T CONNECTED BY MONEY.

SO I FIGURED YOU'D BE SAFE TO TALK TO... THAT'S ALL.

I WASN'T EAVES-DROPPING, EXACTLY... CALL IT A COINCIDENCE.

THOUGHT IT'D BE ODD TO JUST WALK UP AND SAY "LET'S CHAT."

SO WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE JEAN COMPANY?

FIGURED I'D TRY DROPPING THE JEAN COMPANY NAME AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED. I'M GLAD IT WORKED.

YOU'RE EVEN MORE CURIOUS NOW, AREN'T YOU?

QUITE. I'D LIKE TO VISIT THEM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

MIGHT I INQUIRE AS TO WHY?

PACHI

PACHI (CRACKLE)

I HEARD FROM THE BOATMAN THAT THE JEAN COMPANY KNOWS THE NORTHLANDS WELL.

SO I THOUGHT I'D ASK THEM THE WAY.

HOHH ...

MY COMPANION WAS BORN IN THE NORTH.

..... HOME, EH?

I'VE A "CONTRACT" WITH HER TO ACCOMPANY HER UNTIL SHE'S RETURNED HOME.

AND HERE I WAS CERTAIN YOU WERE GOING TO GO ASK ABOUT THE BOOK THE JEAN COMPANY IS LOOKING FOR.

IT'S A FAMOUS STORY IN THE REGION AND ALL.

YOU'RE WELL-INFORMED.

I'VE HEARD A COMPANY IN A TOWN CALLED LESKO WANTS IT.

I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT THEM HANDLING COPPER COINS HEADED FOR WINFIEL...

SO THE JEAN COMPANY MUST BE A FAIRLY BIG ONE TOO.

THAT'S RIGHT... I THINK THEY'RE CALLED THE DEBAU COMPANY. THEY'VE GOT A TIGHT HOLD ON THE MINING INTERESTS AROUND LESKO, SO THEY'RE IN A FINE POSITION.

IF THEY SEE A FACE THEY DON'T RECOGNIZE, THEY'LL TURN YOU AWAY AT THE DOOR.

NO MATTER HOW PROSPEROUS THEY MAY BE, THEY STILL HANDLE MONEY.

I SEE.

I DEAL WITH THE JEAN COMPANY FROM TIME TO TIME.

I'LL WRITE YOU A LETTER OF INTRO-DUCTION.

AREN'T YOU A FUNNY FELLOW?

I WAS THINKING I'D USE THAT ANGLE.

THEY'RE LOOKING FOR A BOOK WITH A HUGE REWARD ON IT, THOUGH.

IT'S SO SUSPICIOUS THAT IT'S STRANGELY BELIEVABLE.

A TRAVELING MERCHANT CALLING ON A COMPANY ABOUT THE BOOK WITH A WOMAN AND CHILD IN TOW.

I CAN SEE WHY OLD MAN AROLD LIKES YOU!

AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK ME WHAT I DEAL IN?

.....

...YOU'D DO THAT FOR ME?

REMINDS ME OF WHEN I FIRST MET HOLO.

YOU DIDN'T ASK ME WHAT MY COMPANION'S TRADE WAS, SO...

...COULD I PUT ANOTHER QUESTION TO YOU?

...INSTEAD OF ASKING YOU YOUR BUSINESS...

PACHI (CRACKLE)

PA (POP)

SO...

...HOW MUCH WILL YOUR INTRO-DUCTION FEE BE?

WHAT IS IT?

I ASK FOR NEITHER COIN NOR GOODS.

ALL I ASK IS THAT YOU CHAT WITH ME.

BUT SOMEONE I CAN TALK TO WITHOUT HIDING THE FACT THAT I'M A WOMAN IS WORTH MORE THAN LIMAR GOLD TO ME.

WHAT? IT'S NO LIE. THOUGH I'M NOT SURPRISED YOU'RE SUSPI-CIOUS.

NIYA! (GRIN)

BUT LESS THAN LUMIONE?

I'M A MERCHANT, AFTER ALL. MONEY'S WHAT MATTERS MOST.

GLU (YANK)

SINCE I DON'T KNOW WHAT SORT OF WOMAN YOUR COMPANION IS...

...I'D PREFER TO KEEP THIS ACQUAIN-TANCE BETWEEN US.

WHEW.

I DON'T THINK THAT WILL BE A PROBLEM.

A SULKY COMPANION SPOILS THE WINE.

OUTSIDE OF BEING TEASED, ANYWAY.

I MIGHT NOT LOOK IT, BUT—

I'M NORMALLY WANDERING AROUND THE DELTA MARKETPLACE, SO IF YOU'RE FREE, YOU SHOULD COME AND CHAT.

YOU'RE A CHARMING CONVER-SATION-ALIST.

HEH, I SUPPOSE SO.

SO LONG AS MY COMPANION DOESN'T TURN JEALOUS.

HA HA HA!

INDEED, THAT'D BE A TERRIBLE TURN OF EVENTS.

THE NEXT DAY, JEAN COMPANY

KO (PECK)

KO

IS THIS THE PLACE...?

BUT IF YOU'VE COME TO SELL...

IF YOU'VE COME TO BUY, I WELCOME YOU, AND GLADLY.

...I'M AFRAID YOU MAY HAVE WASTED THE TRIP.

NNEH-HEH!

I MAKE YOU AS A MERCHANT FROM THE SOUTH.

(GI (CREAK)

IS BUSINESS AS BAD AS ALL THAT?

BASA

BASA (FLAP)

DEPENDS ON THE PLACE...

AAAH...

IS BUSINESS GOOD DOWN SOUTH, THEN?

KASA (RUSTLE)

NNEH; HEH-HEH!

HA HA HA!

?

BA (WHAP)

WELL, IT'S TERRIBLE HERE! IT'S THE WORST!

SO?

AN EGG? I'LL HAVE TO PICK THAT UP LATER.

WHAT NEWS OF PROFIT DOES THIS MERCHANT BRING...

...WITH TWO LUMPS IN TOW?

THIS.

!

PARA (FLIP)

OH, MY APOLOGIES.

COM-PANY?

SO YOU'RE ACQUAINTED WITH THE BOLAN *COMPANY*, EH?

BASA (FLAP)

BASA

—BETTER JUST GO ALONG WITH HIM.

IN-DEED SO.

SHE MAY DO BUSINESS ALL ALONE WITHOUT SO MUCH AS HANGING UP A SIGN, BUT ANYONE WHO CASTS AS WIDE A NET AS SHE DOES...

...IS A SERIOUS TRADING COMPANY, DON'T YOU THINK?

WAK

WAK

WAK (NATTER)

HOH! HOH!

NEVER THOUGHT A MAN WOULD COME IN HERE WITH A LETTER FROM THAT WOLF OF A WOMAN.

SO, MR. KRAFT LAWRENCE, HOW'D YOU GET HER OVER THE FIRE, EH?

NNEH-HEH!

—AH, I SEE. IT'S BEEN QUITE SOME TIME SINCE ANYONE'S BEEN INTERESTED IN THIS STORY.

NOW, WHAT BRINGS YOU TO—

KASA (SHFF)

THAT'S A SECRET.

GATA (CLACK)

...BUT YOU MUST BE QUITE SERIOUS.

SINCE YOU WENT TO THE TROUBLE OF COMING HERE BY WAY OF EVE BOLAN.

DOKI (BADUM)

DOKI

I HAD IMAGINED HIM SLIGHTLY YOUNGER, BUT THIS IS THE RIGHT MAN...

WELCOME, KRAFT LAWRENCE.

WHERE DID YOU HEAR ABOUT THE BOOK?

I'M THE MASTER OF THE JEAN COMPANY, TED REYNOLDS.

HOHH?

...ACTUALLY, THESE TWO ARE FROM THE NORTHLANDS.

I SEE...

GACHA (KACHAK)

VERY WELL... WAIT A MOMENT, WOULD YOU?

THERE'S THE SEARCH FOR THE BOOK, OF COURSE, BUT...

...THEY'RE ALSO WORRIED ABOUT THE EFFECT THAT ITS DISCOVERY MIGHT HAVE.

BATAN (SHUT)

DOSA (FWUMP)

...AFTER HEARING THE RUMOR THAT A CUSTOMER OF MINE HAD PUT A TRULY REMARKABLE PRICE ON A CERTAIN BOOK.

THIS... IS THE RESULT OF THE EFFORT OF ALL THE PEOPLE WHO SO HELPFULLY COOPER-ATED...

AHEM!

コホン

...AND SO MANY OF THEM.

LETTERS ...

I WON'T LIE TO ANYONE BEARING A LETTER FROM THE SHE-WOLF OF THE BOLAN HOUSE.

NNEH-HEH!

AND BY CUSTOMER, YOU MEAN THE DEBAU COMPANY?

I RESPECT HER.

WHICH MEANS I RESPECT ANYONE SHE TRUSTS— YOU, FOR ONE, KRAFT LAWRENCE.

AHEM!

I APOLOGIZE FOR INTER-RUPTING YOUR TALE.

NOT AT ALL. IF I'M THE ONLY ONE TALKING, I'LL NEVER NOTICE HOW LONG-WINDED I'M BEING.

THE DEBAU COMPANY IS A POWERFUL ONE, AND EVEN NOW CONTROLS MOST OF THE ROAM RIVER BASIN.

AS YOU KNOW, THEY'RE BENT ON LEVELING THE MOUNTAINS AND MINING THE REGION.

WE MUST MEET WHATEVER COMES DOWN THE RIVER, WHATEVER HAPPENS.

IN BUSINESS, THERE ARE OFTEN OFFERS YOU CAN'T REFUSE...

...AND MY COMPANY SITS AT THE BOTTOM OF THE RIVER OVER WHICH THE GREAT SPIRIT OF ROAM RULES.

TRULY...

...NO MATTER THE COST, EH?

THE INFORMATION I HAVE ON THE MATTER IS QUITE SOLID, IF YOU ASK ME.

THIS IS JUST MY OWN GUESS, BUT I BELIEVE THE TOME WAS STORED IN THE ABBEY AT AQUENT BUT WAS LOST IN A FIRE THERE.

ANYWAY, IT TURNED INTO QUITE A COMMOTION.

BECAUSE SOME WERE SAYING THAT IF THE REAL THING WERE FOUND, THEY'D BE PAID A THOUSAND, TWO THOUSAND LUMIONE FOR IT.

THERE WAS A GREAT FIRE IN AQUENT FOUR OR FIVE YEARS AGO!

.....

OH HOHH!

A STUDENT, WERE YOU?

ZUI (ZOOM)

UH, UM...

SO, UM... COULD YOU SHOW US ANY OF THE LETTERS RELATING TO AQUENT?

THE ONLY THING MORE IMPORTANT TO A MERCHANT THAN LIFE ITSELF IS INFORMATION.

OH, BOY...

!

COL...

I'M VERY SORRY, SIR.

PEKOR. (BOW)

THAT'S TRUE.

AND GIVING IT TO YOU YIELDS NO BENEFIT TO MR. REYNOLDS.

YOU COULDN'T POSSIBLY AFFORD TO PAY WHAT THAT INFORMATION IS WORTH RIGHT NOW.

NNEH-HEH!

IF YOU'LL BECOME MY APPRENTICE, I'LL SHOW YOU AS MANY LETTERS AS YOU LIKE.

NNEH-HEH!

NNEH-HEH!

HEH!

YOU'VE GOT YOURSELF A FINE APPRENTICE THERE, MR. LAWRENCE.

A SMART, OBEDIENT CHILD IS LIKE A GOLDEN EGG.

WHOA!

UNFOR-TUNATELY, THAT WON'T BE POSSIBLE, MR. REYNOLDS.

HE'S NOT MY APPRENTICE. HE'S A FUTURE SCHOLAR OF CHURCH LAW.

IF I SAID HE WAS MY APPRENTICE, I'D NEVER BE ABLE TO PASS THROUGH THE GATES OF HEAVEN.

SA (SWF)

SU (SHF)

MY GOODNESS

HRMMMM... I SEE WHY THAT WOLF OF A WOMAN WOULD PUT HER TRUST IN YOU IF YOU'RE TRAVELING WITH SUCH A TALENTED YOUNGSTER.

SO, THEN, IS THIS ONE FROM A FAMOUS CONVENT SOMEWHERE?

HOHH.

NI (SMIRK)

.....

HA!

WHAT FINE GUESTS YOU ALL ARE!

NN!

IT'LL BE MIDDAY SOON. SHALL WE ALL TAKE A MEAL IN CELEBRATION OF OUR MEETING?

WE'D BE HAPPY TO.

ITTGATA (RATTLE)

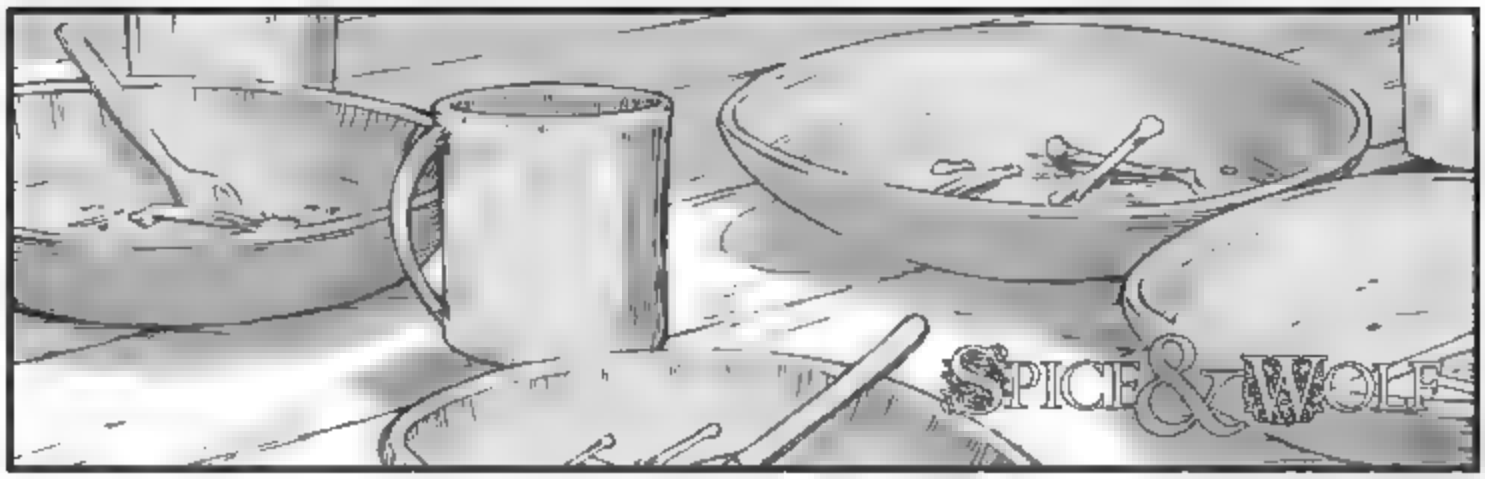
...LET'S SEE YOU CATCH A CHICKEN TO EAT.

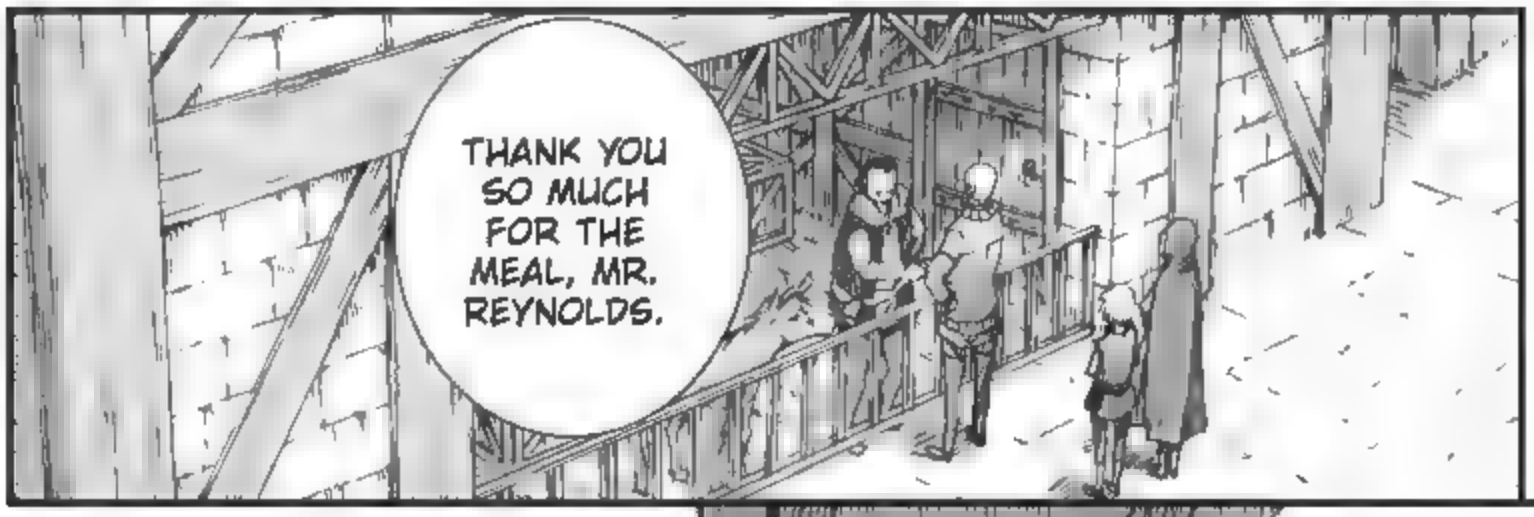
BASA (FLAP)

GYAAAA (SQUAWK)

NNEH-HEH!

BUT FIRST—


SPICE&WOLF


THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR THE MEAL, MR. REYNOLDS.


WHEW —
OF COURSE.


HEH-HEH! GIVE MY REGARDS TO EVE BOLAN.
GYU (SQUEEZE)

# SPICE & WOLF



SU (SHF)

GIVEN THE CHANGE IN REYNOLDS'S DEMEANOR... EVE MUST BE QUITE A PERSON.

NOW, THEN...

HYO! (PLUCK)

YOU LOOK TROUBLED.

KUH FU FU!

JUST IGNORE THEM...

!

HE TOLD US EVERYTHING A LOT MORE EASILY THAN I WAS EXPECTING.

HMM?

I WAS SURE HE'D TRY TO HIDE MORE FROM US.

BUT THERE IS ONE UNFORTUNATE THING.

WE'VE CONFIRMED THAT THE DEBAU COMPANY IN LESKO IS INDEED LOOKING FOR THE BOOK.

IT'S A BIG STEP FORWARD.

INDEED .....

SINCE WE LEARNED WHAT WE NEEDED TO KNOW SO EASILY, IT LOOKS LIKE WE WON'T NEED TO USE OUR TRUMP CARD.

DOSU (THWUP)

THE COPPER COINS, EH?

*FIFTY-EIGHT BOXES PACKED WITH COPPER COINS COMING DOWN THE RIVER HAD BECOME SIXTY BOXES ON THEIR WAY TO THE KINGDOM OF WINFIEL.*

THERE'S A GOOD CHANCE THAT THE JEAN COMPANY IS UP TO SOMETHING, BUT...

—I STILL CAN'T QUITE EXPLAIN IT YET.....

I'M SORRY...

...ABOUT ALL WE CAN DO IS GATHER INFORMATION WITHOUT DRAWING SUSPICION.

NOW THEN, AS FAR AS THIS ALL GOES...

AND GO BACK TO EVE AND THANK HER!

ぽん PON (PAT)

PON ぽん

WELL, IF THERE'S NO REASON TO USE IT...

...YOU CAN JUST TELL ME ONCE OUR JOURNEY'S OVER, BY WAY OF THANKS.

—THAT'S BECAUSE IT WOULD BE BAD IF SOMEONE FOUND OUT WE WERE HUNTING DOWN THE BOOK IN EARNEST...RIGHT?

...THEY'LL START TO WONDER IF WE'VE DISCOVERED SOME KIND OF KEY.

SO IF WE KEEP SEARCHING TOO SERIOUSLY ...

...MAY WELL BE BECAUSE HE'S ALREADY THOUGHT THE WHOLE THING THROUGH AND COME TO HIS OWN CONCLUSIONS.

THE REASON REYNOLDS TOLD US SO MUCH...

WELL, DOUBTLESS HE WAS HIDING SOMETHING.

EH?

BUT WE'RE UP AGAINST A MERCHANT.

THEY SAY A FEARSOME HAWK IS ONE THAT HIDES ITS TALONS.

KUH FU FU!

HIDING ONE'S EARS WITHOUT HIDING ONE'S TAIL, EH?

IF ONE IS TO HIDE SOMETHING WHEN BEING ASKED ABOUT THE BOOK—

IT'S NOT HARD TO GUESS AT WHAT.

I THINK WHAT HE WAS HIDING WAS NOT HIS EARS, BUT HIS HORNS.

OH, C'MON...

WHEN YOU WERE PARTING, HE GAVE YOU QUITE THE FIERCE HANDSHAKE, DID HE NOT?

IN ANY CASE, WE'LL NEED TO LOOK AROUND THIS TOWN A BIT MORE.

WHEN HE TOLD ME TO GIVE HIS REGARDS TO EVE BOLAN, HE MEANT EITHER HER BUSINESS SKILL OR HER CONNECTIONS ...

AND THAT IS?

GUI (GLOMP)

IF THERE IS NO NEED TO GO STRAIGHT BACK TO THAT VIXEN'S BURROW, THEN I'VE A PLACE I'D LIKE TO GO.

THAT LIVELY-LOOKING PLACE OVER THERE!

WELL, I SUPPOSE WE HAVEN'T THANKED COL FOR THAT SALVE YET, SO...ALL RIGHT!

LET'S GO!

UZU (FIDGET)

UZU




GAYA
GAYA (CHATTER)


SHUUU (SIZZLE)


WHA —!?
ALL YOU THINK ABOUT IS FOOD.



I AM ALWAYS THINKING ABOUT YOU, AS WELL!

POFU (FLUMP)

ぽふ

ぱふっ

THAT'S BECAUSE I AM YOUR FOOD.

SO YOU'LL LOOSEN YOUR PURSE STRINGS A BIT FOR ME?

DID YOU PUT COL UP TO THAT?

KUH FU! FU!

TH-THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR THE FOOD.

CHIRA (GLANCE)

GOTO (TNK)

ゴトッ

BROTHER... I FEEL LIKE I ALREADY NEED MY AFTER-DINNER DRINK.

ZAWA (CHATTER)

ざわ

GOSOKUGA (HURRY)

ごそくが

...HN, WHAT'S THIS?

ZA (CSH)

ZAWA

ZAWA

ZAWA

YES, AS A BIT OF A BREAK FROM WORK.

...BUT MAYBE SIGHTSEEING COMES FIRST.

I THOUGHT FOR SURE YOU'D HEADED TO THE SOUTH SIDE...

ZORO

ZORO (MILL)

FOR MY PART, I WAS IN THE MIDDLE OF RESTING UP WHEN THAT LOT FLUSHED ME OUT.

HEE HEE.

ZORO (GLARE)

ARE THEY MERCHANTS?

ZUI (CLOSE)

THEY'RE NOT INVOLVED IN BUYING OR SELLING GOODS.

THEY'RE FROM THE NORTH SIDE OF TOWN.

—BUT THEY'RE AWFULLY GOOD AT BOOK-KEEPING.

...ZOKU (CHILL)

SO, IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

...TILL WE MEET AGAIN.

WAI

WAI (CHATTER)

WAI

WAI

WAI (CHATTER)

IS TODAY A FESTIVAL DAY OR SOMETHING?

WAI

WOW ...!

THE LEADERS OF THE TOWN ARE HAVING THEIR MEETING AT THE "SPRING OF GOLD" TODAY.

AND THE CROWDS HAVE TURNED UP TO WATCH, YOU SEE.

AS I RECALL, WHEN WE FIRST ENTERED PAZZIO...

...YOU SAID SOME-THING VERY SIMILAR.

MU! (RK)

EH-HEHN!

I HAVE BEEN TO TOWNS WHERE THEY'RE LIKE THIS THROUGH AND THROUGH.

HMM?

'TIS HARDLY THE ONLY PLACE SO CROWDED, YOU KNOW.

LOOK, THAT BRIDGE THERE.

THERE'S A SPRING?

IT WAS PROBABLY AROUND THEN THAT THE BRIDGE CAME TO BE CALLED THE "SPRING OF GOLD."

THEN A CHANNEL WAS DUG THROUGH IT, AND A BRIDGE BUILT OVER IT.

LONG AGO, THERE WAS A POND HERE THAT WAS A HAVEN FOR BIRDS AND FISH.

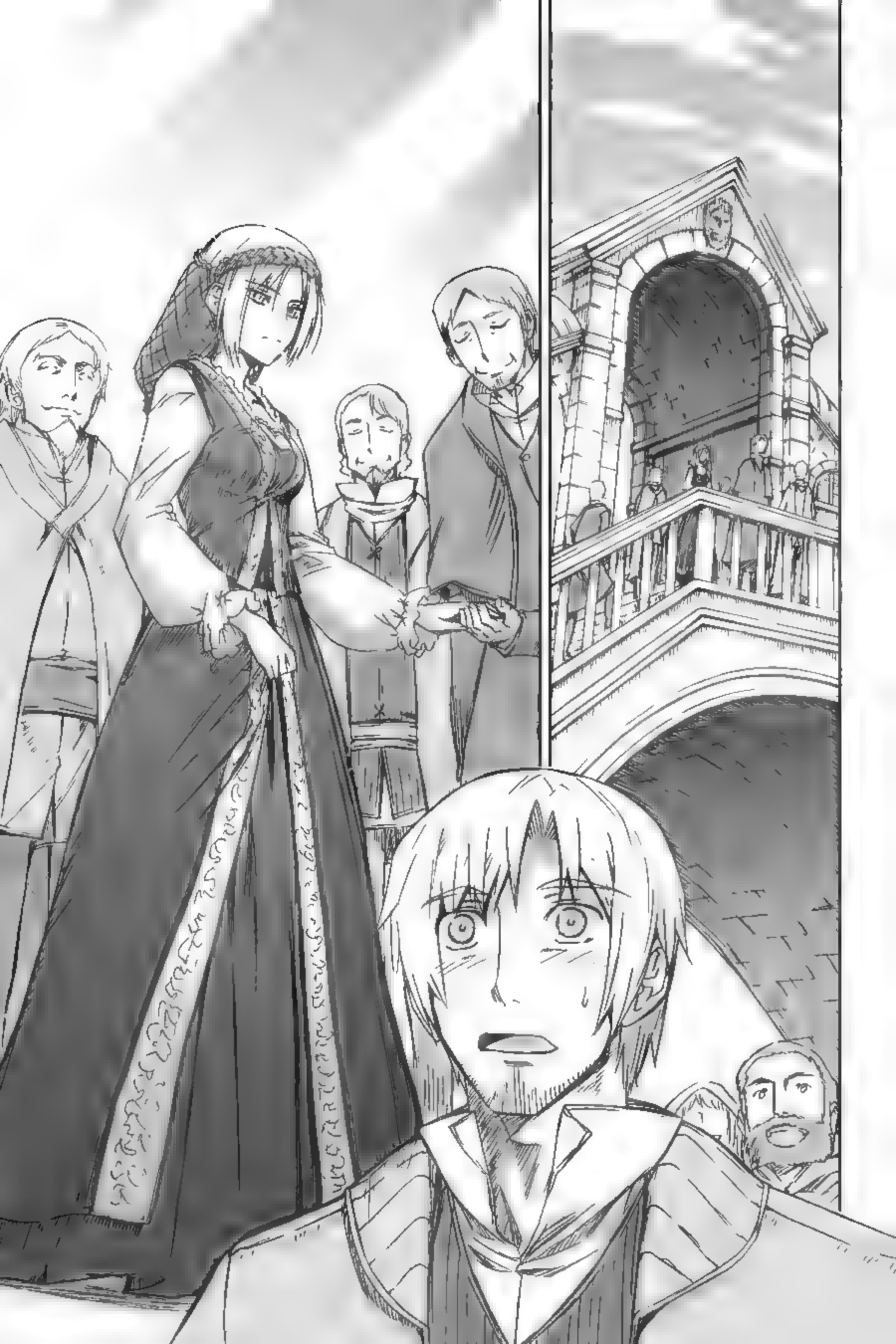
!

GAYA (CHATTER)

GAYA

...THE DECISIONS OF THE MEETING MUST BE RATHER IMPORTANT. SO IT MAKES SENSE FOR IT TO DRAW A CROWD.

A MEETING, EH...? IF THEY'RE HOLDING IT IN SUCH A VISIBLE LOCA-TION...



—SHALL I LOOK ONLY AT YOU FROM NOW ON, THEN?

YOU'VE SOME NERVE, WATCHING ANOTHER FEMALE RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.

GA (BONK)

GASHI (GRAB)


OWWW...
AH!
MISS HOLO!
PUI (FWIP)


UH, ER...
HMM?
ARE YOU NOT GOING TO FOLLOW HER?


ZAWA
ZAWA (CHATTER)


NADE
NADE (PAT)


I DON'T THINK SO—
I AM NOT. I THINK SHE'D LIKE YOU TO GO WITH HER.


IT'S TRUE THAT SHE'S ANGRY WITH ME. BUT THE PART WHERE SHE'S QUARRELING WITH ME, THAT'S A LIE.
YOU'RE A CLEVER LAD, BUT I SUPPOSE THAT CONVERSATION JUST NOW WAS A BIT TRICKY.

BE CAREFUL THAT HOLO DOESN'T HAVE TOO MUCH WINE.

THIS SHOULD BE MORE THAN ENOUGH FOR ALL THE FOOD AND DRINK YOU COULD WANT.

KOKU (NOD)

PITA (TUP)

NOW THEN, SHALL WE HAVE A LOOK AROUND?

I'M LUCKY COL'S HERE...

GAYA (CHATTER)

GAYA

A TRENNI FOR SOME SIGHTSEEING, EH? RATHER PRICEY.

THOUGH I SUPPOSE IT IS SOMETHING WORTH SEEING...


THE ONE SAID TO BE THE SUCCESSOR TO THE NORTH SIDE REPRE-SENTATIVE POSITION, RIGHT?
HEY, DID YOU SEE? ISN'T SHE THAT ERSTWHILE NOBLEWOMAN FROM THE RUMORS?


IT'LL BE INTERESTING TO SEE HOW SHE'LL GET OUT OF THE DEBT FROM THE MARKETPLACE EXPANSION...


OH, SHE'S GONNA DO IT!? THE EAST SIDE OF THE SPRING, RIGHT? A FRIEND OF MINE JUST BOUGHT A BUILDING THERE!
THE NORTH'S IN DEBTORS' HELL AGAIN.

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZAWA

GA (STAMP)

GA

GA

HEY, THE MEETING'S STARTING.

IN THE NAME OF THE GREAT SPIRIT OF THE RIVER, ROAM!

WE PROCLAIM THIS MEETING A HOLY THING!

KARAAAN (CLANG)

KARAAAN

KARAAAN

ULLI (SWAY)

I'M SORRY. I TRIED TO STOP HER...

UUUU!

NO, YOU DID WELL. AT LEAST I WON'T HAVE TO CARRY HER BACK TO BED.

WAKU (BOUNCE)

WAKU

ZA (SKSH)

!

SURE? BUT...

—SORRY, COL, BUT COULD YOU SEE HOLO BACK TO THE INN?

...IT LOOKS THAT WAY, YES.

THE CHANGE FROM THE COIN YOU GAVE ME WILL BE ENOUGH TO PAY THE FERRYMAN, BUT...

HAS SOME-THING COME UP?


SPICE&WOLF

YOU HAD A GOOD VANTAGE POINT, DIDN'T YOU?

ABOUT THAT MEETING.

WHAT DID YOU THINK?

—IT WASN'T A FARCE, EXACTLY, BUT...

...IT MADE ME REALIZE THINGS ARE DIFFICULT EVERY-WHERE.

IT DID, DIDN'T IT?

A MEETING'S CONCLUSION ALWAYS COMES FROM SOMEWHERE OUTSIDE THE PARTICIPANTS.

DON'T YOU THINK?

YOU WERE QUITE LOVELY IN THE OPEN LIKE THAT... BUT THEY'VE ENTRUSTED THEIR UNDER-THE-TABLE DEALINGS TO YOU AS WELL, I HEAR?

NOT TO PUT TOO FINE A POINT ON IT.

IF I SAID IT MADE ME HAPPY YOU WERE HONESTLY ENVIOUS, WOULD YOU LAUGH?

.....I'M WONDERING WHY YOU'D BOTHER IDLING AROUND ON A BOAT WITH ME, THEN.

I'D LAUGH, ALL RIGHT.

I WAS RIGHT TO SPOT YOU AND CALL YOU OVER.

THE TRUTH IS, I WAS RATHER MELANCHOLY ABOUT HAVING BEEN SUMMONED BY THAT LOT.

KARAAAN

KARAAAN (CLANG)

SHALL WE CONTINUE THIS ON THE WAY TO THE PIER? IT'LL BE CLOSING SOON.

I'LL ROW, THEN.

GOTO (THUNK)

WE TRAVELING MERCHANTS CAN HANDLE MOST FORMS OF TRANSPORT.

QUITE SO.

IT'S BORROWED, SO TRY NOT TO HIT ANYTHING.

THAT MELANCHOLY YOU MENTIONED— WAS IT BECAUSE IT WON'T MAKE YOU ANY MONEY?

I PLAYED WITH FIRE IN THE LAST TOWN I WAS IN, SO IT WAS A RELIEF TO ARRIVE HERE—

THAT MEETING WAS AN OBLIGATION THAT ALLOWED ME TO BREATHE A LITTLE EASIER...

BUT THEY'VE ORDERED ME TO DO SOMETHING ESSENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE.

TO THOSE IN THE MEETING, I'M SORT OF A MERCENARY.

DO YOU KNOW THE STORY BEHIND THIS MARKET-PLACE?

NO...

SCORES OF YEARS AGO, A GROUP OF MERCHANTS FROM THE SOUTH...

...PROPOSED THE MARKET-PLACE BECAUSE THEY WANTED A PLACE TO TRADE WITH THE NORTH.

AND OF COURSE, THE MERCHANTS WANTED TO BUY UP THE DELTA AND BUILD THE MARKETPLACE THERE THEMSELVES, AND THEY TOLD THE NORTHERN LANDOWNERS AS MUCH.

...HOWEVER, THE LAND-OWNERS WERE A LITTLE SHORT ON WISDOM.

THEY THOUGHT THAT IF THEY SOLD THE LAND, IT WOULD BE A HUGE LOSS.

SO THEY BRAGGED THEY WOULD CONSTRUCT THEIR OWN MARKET.

—EVEN IF IT DROVE THEM INTO A DEEP DEBT.

I SEE... THE LAND-HOLDERS WERE FROM THE NORTH.

THE MONEY-LENDERS WERE FROM THE SOUTH?

GUI (GULP)

YES.

THE MEN AT THE MEETING ARE THE SONS OF THE ONES WHO BORROWED THE MONEY AND THOSE WHO LENT IT.

OF COURSE, THE LANDOWNERS CAN'T HIDE THEIR IRRITATION AT THIS AND ARE CONSTANTLY LOOKING FOR A WAY OUT.

IN EXCHANGE FOR NOT LOSING THE LAND AND RECEIVING EXORBITANT RENT FOR ITS USE...

...THEY WIND UP PAYING AN EQUIVALENT AMOUNT OF INTEREST TO THE SOUTHERN MERCHANTS.

BUT THEY HAVEN'T FOUND ONE...

—SO, WHAT WILL THE SECOND GENERATION LOOK FOR NEXT?

THE ANSWER IS SIMPLE.

A SCAPE-GOAT.

YES... IT WAS SHABBIER THAN I EXPECTED.

YOU SAW REYNOLDS'S PLACE, DIDN'T YOU?

STILL, I DON'T HAVE A MONOPOLY ON MIS-FORTUNE.

.....

...BUT EVEN A PLACE THAT DEALS ONLY IN COPPER EXPORTS HAS ITS PROFIT SWALLOWED UP BY THE POWERS THAT BE.

KUH!

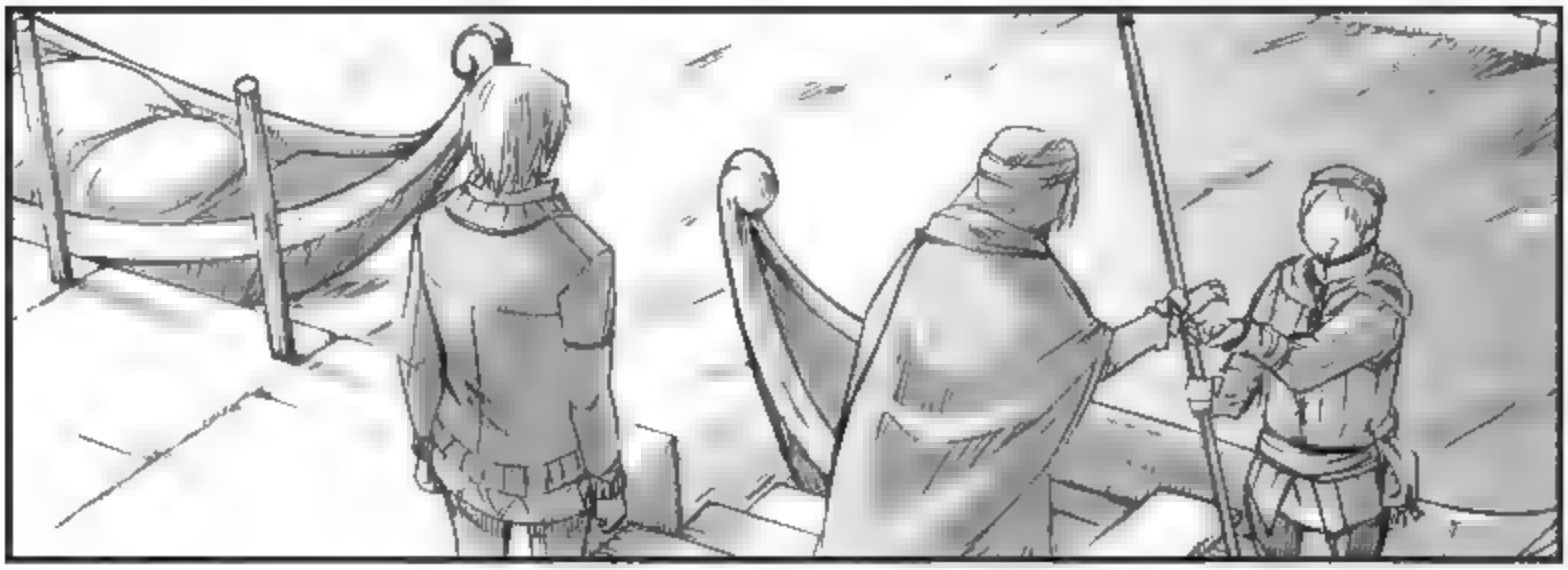
KUH!

AT LEAST BE A LITTLE MORE CIRCUMSPECT ABOUT IT!

THAT'S THE SORT OF PLACE THIS IS.

HO THERE!

AH, IT'S THE BOAT-MAN.






I MUSTN'T GET YOU INVOLVED IN ANY TROUBLE... I'LL TAKE A DIFFERENT FERRY.


SU (SHF)
THANKS FOR HELPING ME LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BOOK.


SPICE&WOLF



SPICE & WOLF

YOU THERE.

HERE! UP HERE!

!

GACHA (KACHAK)

!

A BOAT-MAN'S REST HOUSE, EH?

SO THEY DIDN'T END UP AT THE INN. I GUESS HOLO'S BEING SPITE-FUL...

WE'VE BUT USED THE SILVER COIN YOU GAVE US.

AM I?

YOU'RE CERTAINLY LIVING IT UP.

THERE'S HARDLY ANYTHING LEFT.

WHERE'S COL?

WELL, I'LL HAVE TO EXPLAIN IT TO YOU SOONER OR LATER.

"USING A WHOLE TRENNI ON WINE WITHOUT A SINGLE HESITATION IS SIMPLY—

GISHI (CREAK)

HONESTLY... DON'T DRIVE HIM TOO HARD NOW.

JUST WHERE YOU'RE THINKING.

.....IT WAS PROBABLY FAIRLY COMFORTABLE AT SOME POINT... BUT NOT ANYMORE.

NO MORE PROSTITUTES, AFTER ALL.

AHEM.

コホン

SO?

I ASSUME THERE'S SOME OF MY WINE LEFT.

グィ

DID YOU HEAR MORE ABOUT THAT VIXEN'S CIRCUM-STANCES?

HA (GASP)

GOSHI (RUB)

'TIS WRITTEN ALL OVER YOUR FACE.

AYE.

GOSHI

—DOES IT LOOK LIKE I DID?

YOU'RE A CENTURY TOO YOUNG TO TRY LYING TO ME.

...'TIS A BIT COLD.

GYUMU (SHOVE)

IF YOU'RE TRIPPED UP BY SUCH A RUSE, YOU'VE MUCH TO LEARN YET.

I'LL KEEP THAT IN MIND.

G.SH (CREAK)

SO, OF WHAT TALE DID YOU HEAR TELL?

AH... WELL...

GYUMU (LEAN)

GUI (GLOMP)

OH, AYE?

GUI (GLUG)

SIMPLY PUT, IT'S A MATTER OF DEBT AND PAYMENT, BUT THE AMOUNT IS RATHER ENORMOUS.

TO BE HONEST, IT'S OF THE SORT TO MAKE ME WANT A STIFF DRINK.

YOU'VE HAD TOO MUCH ALREADY.

MU (IRK)

THAT WAS GOAT'S MILK FOR COL... SHE GOT ME.

.....

HEH.

!

BUT YOU WEREN'T. WHY, I WONDER?

IF 'TWAS TALK OF MONEY THAT WAS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN, YOU OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN WAGGING YOUR TAIL IN DELIGHT.

THE NORTH SIDE IS USING HER AS A SCAPEGOAT...

...EVE WAS THERE AT THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL LEADERS AT THE SPRING.

LISTEN HERE, YOU.

?

GISH CLENCH

—AND IT'S JUST...

IF A MERCHANT LIKE HER CAN BE TREATED LIKE THAT...

...IT MAKES ME WONDER WHAT'LL BECOME OF ME...

...SAD.

...I SEE.

LISTENING TO YOU TALK MADE ME MAD ENOUGH FOR TWO.

FIRSTLY...

...BY YOUR REASONING, I'M A PATHETIC FOOL FOR BEING YOUR COMPANION.

BAFU (FLUMP)

BUT NOW LOOKING AT YOUR FACE, I'M THRICE ANGRY.

GATA (CLATTER)

WELL, YOU EAT ENOUGH FOR FIVE, SO YOU'VE GOT TWO LEFT TO GO—

UGH...

GA (WHOK)

AND AS FOR THE LAST...

GISHI (CREAK)

I WON'T ARGUE.

WHAT ARE YOU, A PUP?

SECONDLY, DESPAIRING AT SUCH A FOOLISH NOTION?

...TO SEE YOU TURN TAIL AND BEHAVE IN A MANNER SO UNBECOMING A FULL-GROWN MALE...

...WHEN ON YOUR FACE—!?

...MY FACE?

...YOUR FACE SAYS YOU COULD GO OFF ON YOUR OWN AT ANY MOMENT.

YOU SPEAK OF SUCH WEAKNESS, AND YET...

BUT IF I LOOKED AS THOUGH I COULDN'T CONTINUE ON ALONE, YOU'D RAIL AT ME WITHOUT MERCY, WOULD YOU NOT?

.....

I'D...JUST AS SOON AVOID THAT...

NATU-RALLY, I WOULD!

I'D RAIL AT YOU, TOY WITH YOU, AND TEASE YOU!

WHENEVER I DECIDE SOMETHING, I'LL CONSULT WITH YOU.

THAT'S WHAT YOU MEAN, ISN'T IT?

...AYE.

AND I AM TIRED OF IT.

GYUU (HUG)

WHEN PEOPLE ARE STRONG, THEY DO NOT LOOK BACK.

AND FOR LONG AGES, I COULDN'T LOOK BACK.

EVEN WHEN CONFESSING HER WEAKNESS, THE WISEWOLF OF YOITSU DOES SO IN GRAND FORM.

.....YOU KNOW THAT I'M A COWARD, DON'T YOU?

I'M CONSTANTLY LOOKING OVER MY SHOULDER, TERRIFIED.

SO DON'T WORRY ON THAT COUNT.

I'M TIRED OF THAT TOO!

..... REALLY, NOW.

.....STILL, DON'T YOU THINK IT'S STRANGE?

HONESTLY .....

AT SOME POINT, I SEEM TO HAVE BECOME THE ONE WHO COMFORTS YOU.

'TIS MY PARTICULAR PRIVILEGE, THAT IS WHY!

DESPITE YOUR OFFERING TO ME...

...I HATE THAT THINGS ARE CHANGED LEFT AND RIGHT WITHOUT MY THOUGHTS BEING SOLICITED.

A PRAYER FOR WHAT?

HA HA HA...

I SHOULD THINK ONE IS NECESSARY FOR PRAYER.

SO MY FEELINGS ARE AN OFFERING?

...OH, YOU.

THAT IT WILL BE A BIT LONGER BEFORE THE BOY COL RETURNS FROM SHOPPING.

DA

DA (DASH)

DA

DA

BATAN (SLAM)

I'M BACK!

AYE, I'M GLAD YOU'VE RETURNED.

I'M GOOD! I'M GOOD!

WELL DONE, COL.

I BOUGHT WINE FOR YOU TOO, MR. LAWRENCE!

HA HA HA...

FROM WHAT EVE SAID YESTERDAY, IT SEEMS REYNOLDS HAS INDEED NOT GIVEN UP THE SEARCH FOR THE BOOK.

IT APPEARS THE NORTHERN MERCHANTS ARE BEING SQUEEZED BY THE SOUTHERN LANDOWNERS, SO THEY'RE KEEN TO FIND SOME WAY TO BRING IN A HUGE LUMP OF MONEY TO ESCAPE.

LET'S GO OVER WHAT WE KNOW.

GOTO (TNK)

.....IT SEEMS NOT.

SO THAT VIXEN IS NOT SOME SORT OF EXCEPTION.

SO DOES SHE WANT TO USE YOU TO GET THE BEST OF MR. REYNOLDS, THEN?

GIVING ME A LETTER TO SHOW TO THE JEAN COMPANY WAS PROBABLY PART OF HER PLAN.

COULD YOU SHOW US ANY OF THE LETTERS RELATING TO AQUENT?

BUT WHAT YOU SAID BACK THERE MAY ACTUALLY BE BETTER FOR US, COL.

NADE (PAT)

THAT'S SURELY WHAT REYNOLDS THINKS, SO HE'LL BE ON GUARD.

NADE

KUH FU FU!

BECAUSE NO ONE IN THAT VIXEN'S EMPLOY WOULD JUST COME OUT AND SAY SOMETHING SO NAIVE.

U U U!

AND LIKEWISE, HE'S THINKING TO USE US TO GET THE BEST OF HER.

THERE'S NO QUESTION THAT REYNOLDS THOUGHT WE WERE LITTLE LOST LAMBS BEING USED BY EVE.

POI (POP)

SHE'S BEEN TAMED WITH FOOD...

AH WELL, 'TWAS A TASTY BIRD.

SO WHAT SHALL WE DO, EH?

HE DID HAVE QUITE A GRIP, THOUGH.

BUTSU (MUTTER)

AND ONCE WE'VE GOTTEN THE BOOK, WE'LL DESTROY IT— OR NO, PERHAPS WE'LL LEAVE IT WITH MISS ELSA.

WE NEED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT YOITSU TOO...

BUTSU

IF WE CAN, WE'LL GET THE BEST OF THEM BOTH...

GOKU (GULP)

RIGHT, LET ME EXPLAIN EACH OF YOUR ROLES.

COL WOULD POSE AS A TRAVELING BEGGAR AND HEAD TO THE NORTH SIDE TO FIND OUT WHAT THE OTHER BEGGARS HAD TO SAY ABOUT THE JEAN COMPANY.

HOLO WOULD MAKE FOR THE SOUTH-SIDE CHURCH.

...SHE WOULD DETERMINE THE CHURCH'S INFLUENCE AND MOVEMENTS IN THE UPPER REGIONS OF THE ROEF AND ROAM RIVERS, NOT TO MENTION THE FOREST OF YOITSU WHILE SHE WAS AT IT.

PRETENDING TO BE A NUN ON A PILGRIMAGE NORTH...

OR SO I SAID, BUT I HAVE TO ADMIT I'M UNEASY...

AND I'D HEAD TO THE ROWEN TRADE GUILD BRANCH IN THE DELTA MARKETPLACE TO SEE HOW THE JEAN COMPANY'S BUSINESS AND THE BOOK WERE CONNECTED.

AYE, AND WHAT DID YOU MEAN?

THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEANT, BUT...

MUSU (SULK)

I WAS JUST WORRIED ABOUT WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN IF THE CHURCH WERE TO SOMEHOW DISCOVER YOUR TRUE FORM...

SO 'TIS WELL AND GOOD FOR THE BOY COL TO GO OFF ON HIS OWN, BUT YOU HAVEN'T THE CONVICTION TO LET ME ALONE?

DO YOU THINK I'LL GO ON A DRUNKEN RAMPAGE THROUGH THE SANCTUARY?

HOW "SOMEHOW" DO YOU SUPPOSE?

GASU (WHUD)

YOU FOOL!

I CAN'T IMAGINE THAT, ACTUALLY...

.....

RUL...ER?

PUI (FWIP)

YOU TRULY ARE A TERRIBLY CLUMSY RULER.

—I'M SORRY.

KOFF!

FIRSTLY...

YES, A TERRIBLY CLUMSY ONE!

I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST NOTION WHY IT'S ME YOU WON'T LET GO ALONE IN THIS SITUATION.

...SOMETHING COULD JUST AS EASILY GO AWRY WITH COL.

LISTEN, YOU!

はぁ!?

BA (WHFF)

Y-YES ...?

THE HARDER USE YOU PUT US TO, THE EASIER OUR REINS WILL BE TO HOLD!

AND COL AND I ARE YOUR HANDS.

YOU'RE THE GENERAL AWAITING OUR REPORTS, ARE YOU NOT?

YOU..... ACTUALLY LIKE IT WHEN I COMPLIMENT YOU?

HI

DON (BAM)

UGH!

SO THAT WAS IT...

IF SO, YOU'VE MUCH TO LEARN ABOUT USING OTHERS!

YOU WISH TO HAVE A SHOP OF YOUR OWN ONE DAY, DO YOU NOT?

THAT'S WHAT SO CHARMING ABOUT ME, RIGHT?

AND YET YOU DARE TO TAKE HOLD OF MY REINS?

THANK YOU, HOLO.

—GUESS I BETTER JUST DO MY BEST.

HUH ...?

YOU'RE HOPE-LESS.

PERHAPS.

KERUBE HAD CHURCHES ONLY ON THE DELTA AND THE SOUTH SIDE.

HISTORICALLY, THIS WAS BECAUSE ORTHODOX MERCHANTS TENDED TO COME UP FROM THE SOUTH AND THUS BOUGHT LAND AND SETTLED ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF THE TOWN.

IT WAS TRUE THAT MANY PAGANS LIVED ON THE NORTH SIDE.

—BUT NOW IT WAS THE DELTA THAT WAS BUSIEST WITH THE COMINGS AND GOINGS OF MERCHANTS.

MR. LAWRENCE.

.....?

I'D LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOU.

WOULD YOU SPARE ME A MOMENT?

# SPICE & WOLF

I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE AT THE SPRING OF GOLD YESTERDAY?

OF COURSE THERE WERE GUILD MEMBERS THERE... DO THEY CARE WHAT I WAS PAYING ATTENTION TO?

YES, I SAW RATHER AN INTERESTING SHOW THERE.

FROM WHAT I HEARD, THE LANDOWNERS OF THE NORTH SIDE ARE SO MANY FISH, FLOPPING ABOUT ON LAND.

SO THERE'S A STING, IS THERE?

ONE NEVER KNOWS WHERE THE STING MAY BE LAID, EVEN IN A SEEMINGLY TRANSPARENT CONVERSATION.

HEH-HEH-HEH. AN INTERESTING SHOW, INDEED, MR. LAWRENCE— MOST IMPRESSIVE. THOUGH A RATHER IMPENETRABLE DISPLAY, EVEN FOR A TRAVELING MERCHANT...

THAT WOULD BE TRUE...IF OUR OPPONENTS WERE ONLY THE LAND-OWNERS.

MR. LAWRENCE.

...YOU CHATTED WITH A CERTAIN WOMAN HEAD OF THE BOLAN HOUSE AT THE PIER, DID YOU NOT?

...SEEMS THERE'S BEEN A MISUNDER-STANDING.

THIS IS WHAT I EXPECTED SO FAR... TERRIFYING THOUGH IT IS.

I MERELY HAPPEN TO BE STAYING AT THE SAME INN AS MISS EVE.

THE HEAD OF THE BOLAN HOUSE... IS SHE NOBILITY?

I AM A TRAVELING MERCHANT, SO I'M OBVIOUSLY NOT HER DANCE PARTNER.

—AND HERE I WAS SO SURE YOU WERE INVOLVED IN THE MATTER OF THE FUR, MR. LAWRENCE.

OH? PERHAPS I WAS MISTAKEN.

.....HUH?

BATAN (KATUNK)

...THE PRICE OF FUR HAS JUMPED, EVEN HERE IN KERUBE.

THANKS TO THE DISTURBANCE IN LENOS...

...EVE BOLAN.

AT THE FIRST AUCTION AFTER THE CHAOS, THE ONLY ONE TO OFFER ANY FUR FOR SALE WAS...

I SEE...

NORMALLY, THE RIVER IS THE FASTEST WAY TO GET FURS FROM LENOS TO THE DELTA...

THE RIVER WAS PACKED WITH LARGE BOATS HEADED DOWNRIVER.

MANY OF THOSE WERE HELMED BY INEXPERIENCED SAILORS ASSEMBLED IN A HURRY.

BUT THAT VIXEN TOOK AN OVERLAND ROUTE.

TRAFFIC ON THE RIVER ROUTE WAS DELAYED SEVERAL DAYS.

I'M SURE YOU'RE AWARE OF THIS MUCH, MR. LAWRENCE.

SO HER GUESS WAS CORRECT.

THANKS TO THAT LITTLE "ACCIDENT" ...

...THEY SAY EVE BOLAN MADE A HUGE PROFIT.

EVE WAS THE ONE WHO SET UP THE BOAT RUNNING AGROUND ...?

—SOUNDS LIKE SHE HAS SOME IMPRESSIVE ABILITIES.

I SEE... SO YOU REALLY DON'T KNOW, DO YOU?

...HER NAME IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT AT THE MOMENT, AND WE'RE IN A VERY DELICATE POSITION.

...IS THAT, HERE, IN THIS TOWN...

THE REASON I BROUGHT YOU HERE, MR. LAWRENCE...

...TO SECRETLY COOPERATE WITH THE TOWN HEADMEN FOR PROFIT.

SHE'S USING HER STATUS AS FORMER NOBILITY...

MEANING?

...OF ALL THE INTERESTED PARTIES.

SHE'S PROBABLY THE ONLY ONE WHO HAS A COMPLETE PICTURE...

I HAD NO IDEA SHE WAS SO...MUCH MORE THAN I IMAGINED HER TO BE.

.....

NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE IMPACT OF MAKING A SINGLE MISTAKE IN THEIR DEALINGS WITH HER MIGHT BE.

WELL, MR. LAWRENCE, I'VE CONFIRMED ...

...THAT YOU'RE NOT INVOLVED WITH HER IN DOING BUSINESS HERE.

IT'S A BIT DISAPPOINTING, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, I'M RELIEVED.

AS A GUILD, WE ARE AS CAREFUL IN DEALING WITH HER AS WE ARE IN DEALING WITH THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF THIS TOWN.

...I MUST WONDER AT WHAT HISTORY LED YOU TO DO BUSINESS WITH HER.

STILL .....

I SUPPOSE YOU'RE HOPING TO USE MISS EVE'S CONTACTS TO DISCOVER PROFITABLE INFORMATION?

HERE IN THIS TOWN, THERE ARE MANY WHO WISH TO DEAL WITH EVE BOLAN, BUT SHE'S UTTERLY UNAPPROACHABLE.

I DID NOTHING. SHE APPROACHED ME.

I'M SURE ANYONE WHO CAN GET A FAVORABLE RESPONSE FROM HER WILL DO WELL...

IT WAS NONE OTHER THAN EVE WHO WAS CLASHING WITH THE SOUTH SIDE'S COIN PURSE MERCENARIES AT THE "SPRING OF GOLD," RIGHT?

SHE INGRATIATED HERSELF WITH THE HEADMEN, USED THEM, PROFITED...

...AND THEN WAS UNABLE TO PAY THEM BACK.

OR PERHAPS SHE SIMPLY DIDN'T WANT TO.

—AND ONLY NOW AM I STARTING TO UNDERSTAND WHY.

HOHH?

COME TO THINK OF IT NOW, I'M NOT CERTAIN WHAT SHE HAD IN MIND, BUT I'M A TRAVELING MERCHANT, FIRST AND FOREMOST.

PERHAPS SHE THOUGHT SHE COULD USE ME BY GIVING ME A BIT OF INFORMATION.

QUITE RIGHT.

...IS TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON THE "FOREST OF YOITSU" UP NORTH.

BUT THE MAIN REASON I'VE COME TO KERUBE...

.....

YOU'RE SUCH A BUSY MAN, MR. KIEMAN, I FELT I COULDN'T BOTHER YOU WITH THIS BEFORE.

I SEE... AS A MERCHANT, EH?

I TAKE THIS PROMISE VERY SERIOUSLY.

AS A MERCHANT, I PROMISED TO SEE MY COMPANION, WHO HAS FORGOTTEN THE WAY...

...BACK TO HER HOME IN THE FOREST OF YOITSU.

INCIDENTALLY, MR. LAWRENCE—

SO ON THAT COUNT, YOU'VE FOUND THE RIGHT PERSON TO ASK.

I DOUBT THERE'S ANYONE WHO KNOWS MORE ABOUT THE ROAM RIVER REGION THAN EVE BOLAN.

WHICH IS YOUR PRIORITY?

EVE BOLAN OR THE TRADE GUILD—

YES?

...THE GUILD...OF COURSE.

ER, WELL...

.....!

I SHOULDN'T HAVE LET MY GUARD DOWN...

HUMAN CONNECTIONS ARE ASSETS— THEY ARE CAPITAL.

AND LARGE BUSINESS REQUIRES LARGE CAPITAL.

IN THAT CASE, I'M EXPECTING YOU TO BEHAVE IN A MANNER BEFITTING A MEMBER OF THIS GUILD.

—I'VE COMPLETELY MISJUDGED EVE'S IMPORTANCE AS WELL.

EVE WAS ONLY JUST IN A DIFFICULT PLACE WITHOUT ANYWHERE TO TURN, YOU SEE.

.....
.....

DON (BANG)

DON

DON

DON

CHIEF KIEMAN!

MR. KIEMAN!

DON

WH-WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU ...

...IF YOU'LL EXCUSE ME.

IT SEEMS I HAVE OTHER BUSINESS TO ATTEND TO, SO...

BUT I'VE TAKEN TOO MUCH OF YOUR TIME.

DON

GATA (CLATTER)

DON

...TELLING ME TO DO...?

...AND THEY MAY NOT HAVE LIVED FOR CENTURIES...

THOUGH THEY MAY LACK WOLF EARS OR TAILS...

I FELT THE TRUTH OF THAT.

...YOU'LL SURELY REGRET IT.

AH, YES. ONE MORE THING.

IF YOU SPEAK OF THIS TO ANYONE ELSE...

...THERE ARE PEOPLE IN THE WORLD EVERY BIT HOLO'S EQUAL.


SPICE&WOLF



SPICE & WOLF

ZAWA

ZAWA

PLEASE GO BACK ...!

ZAWA (MURMUR)

ZAWA

ZAWA

UNFORTUNATELY WE MUST ASK EVERYONE TO LEAVE! WE'RE TERRIBLY SORRY!

THE SANCTUARY HAS BEEN RESERVED BY THE SOUTHERN MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION!

ZAWA

WH-WHAT INDEED.

WHAT IS HAPPENING ...?

ZAWA

!

GAYA

HMM...

GAYA

GAYA (CHATTER)

GORO

.....THE SMELL OF SALT AND... THIS IS—

GORO

GORO

GORO (RUMBLE)

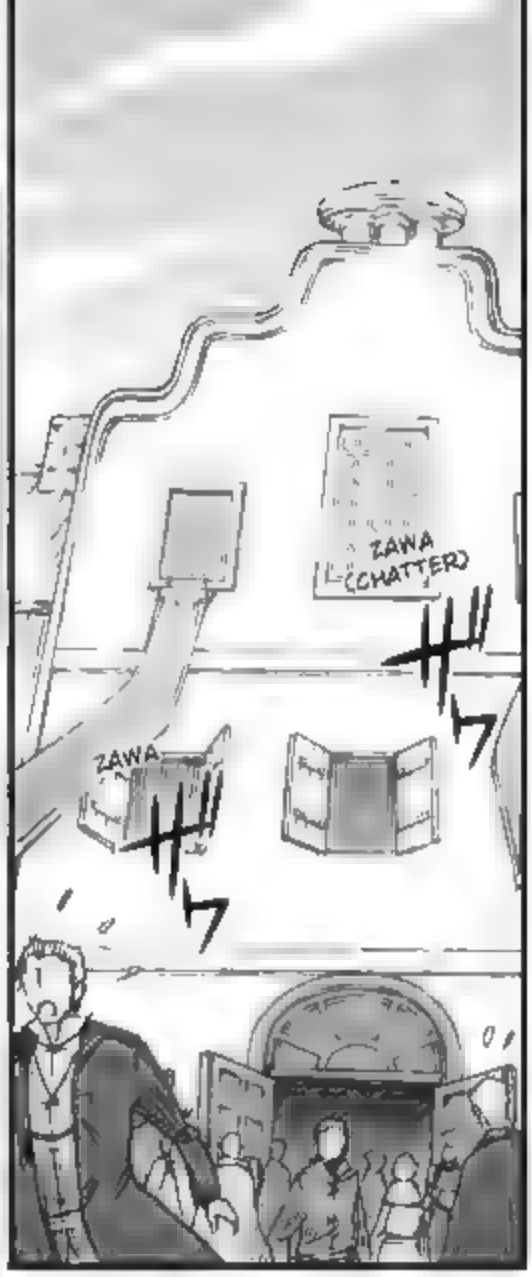
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ZORO

ZORO (CROWD)

WHAT'S THERE ...?




ZAWA
(CHATTER)
ZAWA


THIS IS THE PLACE ...?
MAY I HELP YOU, MISS?




EXCUSE ME, SHE'S AN ACQUAIN-TANCE OF MINE!
AYE, I'VE COME TO TAKE CHARGE OF MY COMPANION.


I COULD SAY THE SAME THING.
WITH THE TOWN SUDDENLY IN SUCH AN UPROAR, I CAN HARDLY LEAVE YOU ON YOUR OWN.
WHAT HAPPENED?

ANYWAY, WE'RE HEADING BACK TO THE INN.

MOCCHI

AYE, 'TWAS AN AMAZING COMMOTION.

SOUTHBOUND BOATS WERE PACKED FULL OF PEOPLE MADLY TRYING TO GET THERE.

MOCCHI (MUNCH)

AAAAH!

BUT I ASSUMED IT WAS JUST TALK OF INTERNAL POLITICS.

ACCORDING TO TALK IN THE TRADE HOUSE, A SHIP FROM THE NORTH SIDE WAS BEING TOWED BY A SHIP FROM A COMPANY ON THE SOUTH SIDE.

?

HOW SHOULD I KNOW? I TRIED TO LISTEN TO THE PEOPLE AROUND ME, BUT TO NO AVAIL.

I THOUGHT 'TWOULD BE BETTER TO FIND YOU AGAIN.

PERO (LICK)

NO

I KNOW MOST OF THE STORY, BUT WHAT COULD MAKE THE CHURCH SEND PEOPLE AWAY LIKE THAT?

WHEN THE FISH HEAD NORTH, THEY FISH IN THE NORTH, AND WHEN THE FISH ARE SOUTH, THEY GO SOUTH.

GIVEN THE CONFLICT IN THIS TOWN, I THOUGHT IT WAS ANOTHER DISPUTE OVER TERRITORY.

YOU CAN'T DRAW LINES IN THE SEA, AFTER ALL.

SAAA (SWSH)

BUT FOR THEM TO TOW IN A NORTH-SIDE SHIP AND BRING ASHORE SOMETHING THAT REQUIRED ARMED ESCORT...

...THEN TO CARRY THAT NOT TO A TRADING COMPANY, BUT TO THE CHURCH—

PACHA (SPLASH)

110 チャ

HMM

I WONDER IF THEY REALLY DID CATCH A MERMAID OR SOMETHING.

A MERMAID?

PERO

THEY'RE A KIND OF LEGENDARY CREATURE.

I'M SURPRISED YOU DON'T KNOW.

.....

AND THERE'S AN OLD LEGEND ABOUT THEM...

AROUND ITS NORTHERN MOUTH IS A REEF WHERE THERE WERE CONSTANT SHIPWRECKS.

THE SEA IMMEDIATELY NEXT TO US IS KNOWN AS THE WINFIEL STRAIT.

MERMAIDS ARE HUMAN FROM THE WAIST UP, BUT BELOW THAT, THEY HAVE THE TAILS OF FISH.

BUT WHAT SORT OF WOMEN SIT ON WAVE-POUNDED ROCKS LIKE THAT, YOU ASK?

...THAT WOMEN WITH VOICES OF UNEARTHLY BEAUTY SING ENCHANTED SONGS FROM THAT REEF, CAUSING SAILORS TO LOSE THEIR WAY AND WRECK THEIR SHIPS ...

HUMAN MALES SURELY ARE EASY TO FOOL.

HMPH.

WHOA!

HEY!!!

AYE, WELL, WE ENJOY OUR WINE AS WELL.

HIKU

HIKU (TWITCH)

ISN'T IT BETTER TO STAY CAREFREE, RATHER THAN CONSTANTLY BEING ON GUARD FOR DECEPTIONS?

...AND NOT TO FALL INTO THIS ONE?

HAVE YOU SWORN TO THE GOD OF THE CHURCH NOT TO FALL INTO THAT TRAP...

ZUI (CLOSE)

HUH?

STILL!

GAH!

I'M ASKING IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING TO HIDE.

YOU FOOL.

IF IT WAS SUCH AN UNREASON-ABLE DEMAND, WHY DIDN'T YOU SIMPLY REFUSE?

COMPARED WITH A MERCHANTS' TRADE GUILD, I'M NOTHING.

UURGH...

HMM.

WELL, I SUPPOSE 'TIS TRUE THAT A YOUNGSTER CAN HARDLY DISOBEY A VETERAN...

THEY HAVE MEMBERS WHO EARN THOUSANDS OF LUMIONE IN A DAY.

THEY'RE POWERFUL ALLIES AND FEARSOME ENEMIES, KNIGHTS WHO WIELD THE PEN AND THE COIN.

ABSURD, YOU MIGHT THINK— BUT THAT'S WHAT A TRADE GUILD IS.

NO MATTER WHAT FAVOR THEY MIGHT ASK OF ME...I CANNOT REFUSE IT.

YOU SEE?

AYE.

AYE.

I CANNOT HAVE YOU LOSING YOUR WAY.

EVEN IF I WERE AT THE TOP OF THAT LIST, I ASSUME YOU WOULDN'T ADMIT IT, WOULD YOU?

ANY-WAY ...

...WHATEVER YOU DECIDE, ALL I NEED DO IS ACT ACCORDING TO MY OWN PRIORITIES.

!

MR. REYNOLDS, EH~?

THIS PAST AUTUMN, HE SAID HE COULDN'T EVEN AFFORD TO EAT WELL AND HAD FALLEN TO SAVING HIS TABLE SCRAPS.

EVEN THOUGH HANDLIN' ALL THAT COPPER COIN MEANS HE WAS RAKIN' IT IN ALL ALONG.

HE'S AWFUL STINGY THESE DAYS, NOT THAT HE WAS EVER MUCH FOR GENEROSITY.

HNNN! NAH, CAN'T BE!

NIGH IMPOS-SIBLE!

HEE HEE

I'D HEARD THAT HE HAD A FORTUNE SAVED AWAY...

I SEE...

IT'S SUCH A TERRIBLE BOTHER!

THE CAN-CELLATION OF THE NORTHERN CAMPAIGNS HAS COME AROUND TO AFFECT EVEN US!

PONZ (PAT)

EAT.

THANK YOU...

BUY YOURSELF SOMETHING TASTY WITH THIS...

TH-THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

KASHA (KACHIK)

EAT! HERE!

DOYA

DOYA

DOYA (CROWD)

DOYA

UU...

I FEEL A LITTLE BAD...

SURE IS HANDY BEIN SO CUTE!

KASHA (CLINK)

THAT'S IT!

KASHA

DA

DA

DA (DASH)

DA

DA

I'M BACK!

GUBI (GLUG)

SEEMS YOU MADE IT BACK SAFELY. ARE YOU HUNGRY?

SORRY I'M LATE...

DOSA (WHOMP)

IT WAS HARD FINDING THE RIGHT TIME TO LEAVE.

KUN (SNIFF)

KUN

GUESS HE'D BE ALL RIGHT TRAVELING ON HIS OWN.

THEN MAYHAP THAT FEAST WAS MEANT TO COURT US.

ZuZuuu (SLURP)

ズズ

I SEE... SO THE JEAN COMPANY IS AS WE THOUGHT THEY WERE.

ACCOR-DING TO WHAT KIEMAN SAID—

...REYNOLDS MAY WELL BE PRETTY CLOSE TO IT.

QUITE LIKELY. IN WHICH CASE, AS FAR AS THE BOOK GOES...

IT SEEMS EVE ONLY SECRETLY NEGOTIATES WITH THOSE WHO CAN MAKE THE GREATEST PROFIT IN THAT PARTICULAR MOMENT.

...IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THAT VIXEN, SHE HASN'T RETURNED SINCE YESTERDAY.

HMM.

SHE'S A DANGEROUS PERSON TO CONTACT... WITH THE CLAIM THAT YOU'LL DO ANYTHING AS LONG AS IT EXPANDS YOUR BUSINESS.

SO... REYNOLDS KNOWS WHERE THE BOOK IS BUT HAS NO WAY TO NEGOTIATE WITH ITS KEEPER.

THAT HE WANTS TO USE EVE AS A MIDDLEMAN... MAKES PERFECT SENSE.

HE HAD A CLEAR GOAL IN WANTING TO APPROACH EVE.

SO...

...ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS GET ON BOARD WITH THAT COMPANY.

?

SUCH CHILDISH GAMBITS—

EH?

IF POSSIBLE, OUR SOLUTION SHOULD BE MONEY... IN THE WORST CASE, A SECRET THEFT WOULD ALSO WORK.

NO, NO.

ENOUGH MONEY CAN EASILY KILL A PERSON.

HMPH...

PUI (F-WIP)

...THE QUESTION BECOMES "WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT, AND THE ANSWER MAY WELL BE "NOT VERY MUCH."

STILL, NOW THAT WE'VE RECOGNIZED THE SITUATION...

AND IT'S FOR MONEY THAT YOUR HOMELAND WILL BE STRIPPED BARE.

THERE'S NOTHING CHILDISH ABOUT THAT.

IF THAT JEAN COMPANY OR WHATEVER 'TIS CALLED IS SEEKING THE AID OF THAT VIXEN...

.....WHY SHOULD THAT BE?

...THEN WE HAVE TWO CHOICES.

...FROM THE LETTER COL FOUND.

AYE. ONE IS THE MYSTERY OF THE COPPER COIN CRATES...

HA! (GASP)

TWO?

ONLY IF WE CAN SOLVE THE MYSTERY FIRST.

WE CAN THREATEN THEM WITH THAT...

YOU SAID 'TIS MOSTLY CERTAIN THAT THE COMPANY INVOLVED IS DOING SOMETHING DISHONEST, AYE?

THE LETTER SHOWING A DIFFERENCE OF TWO CRATES BETWEEN COINS IMPORTED AND COINS EXPORTED.

OH, THAT'S RIGHT!

A LITTLE WHILE AGO I SOLVED THE RIDDLE OF THE COIN CRATES!

MM...

AND THERE'S ANOTHER CHOICE WE HAVE.

I'LL EXPLAIN ONCE THE TABLE'S CLEARED!

SFX: KUSHA (RUFFLE)

WELL DONE INDEED!!

REALLY!? WELL DONE, COL!

THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

WE DO WHAT REYNOLDS WANTS AND PLAY MATCHMAKER TWIXT HIM AND THE VIXEN...

GISHI (CREAK)

...AND GET THE LOCATION OF THE BOOK ONCE HE'S ASKED HER TO HELP HIM.

...WAIT. THERE'S STILL A CLEAR FLAW THERE.

OH, AYE?

WE NEED BUT SEDUCE HER.

...MAKE NO MISTAKE THAT SHE'LL INSTANTLY BE ON GUARD AGAINST HAVING IT STOLEN AWAY.

IF WE ASK HER WHERE THE BOOK IS...

YES. WHAT PROFIT IS THERE FOR EVE IN DOING THAT?

WHY WOULD SHE...?

SFX: BIKU (JOLT)

COL, MY LAD. CLOSE YOUR EYES AND COVER YOUR EARS.

GOKU (GULP)

IS SHE SERIOUSLY TELLING ME TO SEDUCE HER...? I COULDN'T POSSIBLY!

YOU'RE TRYING TO FOOL THIS WISEWOLF, AFTER ALL.

GYU (SQUEEZE

WH-WHAT'RE YOU—

SO IT SHOULD BE NO TROUBLE AT ALL, NAY?

I CAN TELL WHAT YOU'VE EATEN BY SCENT ALONE.

GUGU... (GROWL)

ALL I CAN DO IS PRAY YOU STOP BEING SUCH A RECKLESS MALE.

I'D THEN SPEND LESS EFFORT TRYING TO TEACH YOU THE DIFFERENCE BETWIXT COURAGE AND FOOL-HARDINESS.

AH...

I AM PERFECTLY AWARE OF THAT.

LOOK HERE, THIS IS A MISUNDER-STANDING.

HII

GUI (SHOVE)

I TOLD YOU, 'TIS IMPOSSIBLE TO HIDE ANYTHING FROM ME.

KUH FU FU...

COME! 'TIS YOUR TURN.

ZUZU (SLURP)

ズズ

WE'RE DOWN TO ONE CHOICE NOW.

YUSSA

YUSSA (SHAKE)

!

ALL DONE!

...YOU CAN PACK MORE COINS INTO IT.

DEPENDING ON HOW YOU LINE THEM UP IN THE BOX...

HOHH!

AMAZING ...

'TIS SO SIMPLE...

IF THEY WERE TOLD TO PACK THE CRATES TIGHTLY, NO ONE WOULD THINK TO CHECK EXACTLY HOW THEY WERE PACKED DURING EXPORT.

A LARGER GAP

IF YOU MEASURE THE DIFFERENCE IN THE AREA BETWEEN COINS...

...IT'S ABOUT ONE-THIRTIETH LESS... IN OTHER WORDS, THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIXTY CRATES AND FIFTY-EIGHT.

THE SAME NINE COINS ARRANGED TO FIT IN A SMALLER AREA

THE GAP IS SMALLER.

TAXATION GOES BY THE NUMBER OF CRATES, AS DO TRANSPORT FEES.

THE ONLY THING CHECKED DURING TRANSIT IS WHETHER ANY HAVE BEEN TAKEN.

NOBODY'S CHECKING HOW MANY ARE PACKED PER BOX...

HMM?

HAS NO ONE ELSE NOTICED THIS?

I WONDER, THOUGH...

COMMON SENSE IS A TRICKY OPPONENT ...

SFX: NYUU (PINCH)

I'LL AGREE THAT COL IS A BRIGHT LAD, BUT THERE ARE MANY BRIGHT PEOPLE IN THE WORLD.

IF YOU DID THIS FOR YEARS, SURELY YOU'D EVENTUALLY MEET SOMEONE ELSE WHO KNOWS THE TRICK?

HMM?

NO, THERE'S SOMETHING VERY PARTICULAR NECESSARY TO NOTICE THIS.

YES. ONLY AFTER WE KNOW THE DETAILS OF THE EXPORT AND IMPORT CAN WE BEGIN TO SUSPECT FOUL PLAY.

EVEN SOMEONE WHO LIVES CAUTIOUSLY CAN'T INSPECT EVERY-THING.

AH!

THE MANIFEST, RIGHT?

STILL...

...THIS MEANS WE'VE FOUND A WEAPON TO THREATEN THAT COMPANY, DOES IT NOT?

UNFORTU-NATELY...

...AS WEAPONS GO, IT'S RATHER MEAGER.

UHRRM...

...WHY?

IT'S TRUE THAT IF THIS COMES TO LIGHT, THE JEAN COMPANY WILL EITHER HAVE TO PAY PENALTIES OR LOSE CREDIBILITY.

HE'S REDUCING THE NUMBER OF BOXES SHIPPED BY TWO AND PROFITING VIA THE REDUCED TAXES AND TRANSPORT COSTS.

IT MIGHT'VE BEEN JUST THE RIGHT WEAPON TO USE IF THEY WERE ONLY CHASING THE BOOK FOR FUN.

THAT'S IT, YES.

HOW DULL...

BUT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THAT PENALTY AND THE PROFIT FROM THE BOOK IS TOO GREAT... AYE?

BUT...

HAAAAA (SIIIGH)

AYE, WELL, THAT JUST MEANS THE PROBLEM'S A LARGE ONE.

NADE (PAT)

NADE

UU...

PIKU (TWITCH)

BESIDES, 'TIS BETTER THIS THAN SOMETHING SOLVED WITH THE TRADE OF A SINGLE APPLE.

BA (WHAP)

!

UN (NOD)

QUITE RIGHT. IF ONE METHOD WON'T WORK, WE'LL JUST MOVE ON TO THE NEX—

THE INNKEEPER IS COMING UP.

ゴト ゴト

GOTO GOTO

THAT'S RIGHT. THIS PLACE IS LIKE EVE'S BASE OF OPERATIONS...

ゴト

GOTO (THUMP)

!

GON (KNOCK)

OPEN UP. THERE'S A LETTER FOR YOU.

GON

...A LETTER? FOR ME?

KASA (SHFF)

.....

GII (CREAK)

I'VE GIVEN IT TO YOU NOW...

COME IN.

MAKING THE FIRST MOVE, IS SHE? QUITE THE VIXEN...

COME TO THE INN AT LYDON.
I WANT TO DISCUSS WHEAT.
THERE'S A CARRIAGE WAITING AT THE BACK.
THE DRIVER KNOWS THE PARTICULARS.
I TRUST YOUR DISCRETION IN THIS MATTER.

THE SENDER'S NAME ISN'T WRITTEN HERE. ...IS IT EVE...?

SHE WANTS ME TO COME ALONE ...

SPICE & WOLF

GOTO (CLONK)
ゴト
GOTO
ゴト

GAN (CLANG)
ガン
ガン
GAN

GON (KNOCK)
ゴン
GON
ゴン

I'VE BROUGHT A GUEST.

THAT'S ...

THANK YOU.....

GO ON INSIDE.

チャキ (CHAKI)

PARDON ME.

GACHA KACHAK

!

SURPRISED, ARE YOU?

IT'S COLD OUT THERE. CLOSE THE DOOR IF YOU WOULD. NO LOCK, THOUGH.

.....

SORRY TO CALL YOU OUT SO SUDDENLY.

WELL, ANYWAY, SIT.

SADLY, I'VE NO SERVANTS.

A SECRET RENDEZ-VOUS... EH?

NOT AT ALL. I'M HONORED TO BE SUMMONED FOR A SECRET RENDEZVOUS WITH A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

.....

IT'S A BIT TOO CHILLY TO BE A COMFORTABLE, LIVED-IN HOME.

IT'S WINTER NOW.

STILL, I IMAGINE IT'S NICE AND COOL IN THE SUMMERTIME.

SO MUCH THE BETTER.

IT'LL FEEL WARM WHEN YOU GO OUT.

KUH! KUH!

RIGHT YOU ARE.

I'D LOVE TO GET OUT. THE SOONER, THE BETTER.

YOU WOULD HIDE YOUR WEAPONS OF LAST RESORT TOO, WOULD YOU NOT?

SO, WHY HERE?

A LAND TRANSACTION CONTRACT, EH?

...I SUPPOSE I WOULD.

CERTAINLY, THE REASON I'M LOCKED UP HERE...

...ISN'T BECAUSE I GOT MIXED UP IN THIS CONTRACT.

IT LOOKS LIKE SHE REALLY IS THE ONLY PERSON THE NORTH-SIDERS HAVE TO FIGHT THE SOUTHERN MERCHANTS' ASSOCIATION.

THE REASON I CALLED YOU IS, OF COURSE—

(PACHI (CRACKLE)

110 F

PACHI

110 F

WELL, YOU SAW THE COMMOTION IN TOWN, DIDN'T YOU?

IF THINGS GO BADLY, I'LL NEED MY BREAD TORN INTO RATHER SMALL PIECES TONIGHT.

STILL, I'M GLAD YOU LET YOURSELF BE CAUGHT.

INDEED. IT'S AS THOUGH GOD HIMSELF TIMED IT.

YES... SOMETHING ABOUT THE FISHERMAN'S BOATS FROM THIS SIDE OF TOWN DOCKING IN THE SOUTH, WAS IT?

I JUST HAPPENED TO RETURN HERE WHEN THE NEWS REACHED ME.

NORMALLY, I'M ON THE DELTA.

I'D BE RECOGNIZED, YOU SEE, SO ONCE THE RIOTING STARTED, WE COULDN'T CROSS.

WHENEVER THERE'S A DISTURBANCE IN THIS TOWN, FERRY TRAFFIC IS STOPPED TO AVOID THE PROBLEM SPREADING.

AAH...

EVEN THOUGH OUR SPIES MADE IT TO THE SOUTH SIDE, THERE WASN'T TIME FOR THEM TO RETURN.

WHAT DID YOU HEAR, I WONDER?

I RECKON YOU WERE AT THAT DELTA GUILD HOUSE RIGHT UP UNTIL THE LAST MOMENT.

SO ...

...AS I'M SURE YOU'VE GUESSED, THERE'S INFORMATION I NEED.

I...HEARD A BIT.

I GUESS IT'S POINTLESS TO ASK HOW SHE KNEW I WAS THERE...

I DON'T KNOW THE CARGO... BUT IT WAS WORTH PROTECTING WITH ARMED GUARDS, AND IT WAS WORTH BRINGING DIRECTLY TO THE CHURCH.

A SHIP AFFILIATED WITH THIS SIDE WAS TOWED IN BY A SOUTH-SIDE VESSEL.

MY COMPANION GOT QUITE CLOSE TO THE CHURCH EVIDENTLY.

IS THAT HEAR-SAY?

SO THAT'S IT, IS IT?

I'M GLAD YOU'RE NOT SOME STINGY-TALKING SMALL FRY.

...I WOULDN'T HAVE TO COME WHEN CALLED.

AH, BUT IF I WERE A BIG FISH...

TRUE ENOUGH.

LUCKY, THAT WAS THE RIGHT WAY TO APPROACH THIS...

SO ARE YOU TELLING ME TO GO DOWN A SMALL PASSAGE?

—BUT WHEN YOU'RE A BIG FISH, THE WORLD IS FILLED WITH PASSAGES TOO NARROW FOR YOU TO PASS.

YOU DON'T HAVE ANY PROPER CONNECTIONS HERE...

...BUT YOU'RE ABLE TO HAVE A PLEASANT CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE THAT MANY IN THIS TOWN ARE VERY EAGER TO CONNECT WITH.

YOU'RE IN A UNIQUE POSITION IN THIS TOWN.

OF COURSE, I WON'T SAY IT'S FREE.

I'VE ONLY MEAGER COIN AND GOODS, SADLY, BUT I'VE MORE THAN ENOUGH CONNECTIONS AND INFLUENCE. IT'LL BE A GOOD FOOTING FOR BUSINESS.

PACHI (SNAP)

HIRA (FLUTTER)

HIRA

THE STORY OF THIS CONTRACT WAS TOLD TO ME BY THE LOT THAT LOCKED ME UP IN HERE...

...AND THEIR BELLIES ARE TOO LARGE FOR THEM TO FIT THROUGH ITS PATHS.

...YES, A YOKE.

AND NOT A *YOKE*?*

*A TOOL USED TO HOLD ANIMALS LIKE HORSES OR OXEN IN PLACE WHEN PULLING CARTS. IT RESTRICTS THEIR MOVEMENT.

...HOW I GOT THIS WOUND?

AREN'T YOU GOING TO ASK...

KUH!
KUH!
WELL PLAYED.
KUH!
KUH!
KUH!
KUH!
PFFFFT!
HOW'D YOU GET IT?
BUT I'M ALSO NOT BADLY PLACED TO CROSS THAT DANGEROUS BRIDGE.
IT'S NOT THAT I'M ASKING YOU ONLY BECAUSE YOU'RE IN THE BEST POSITION.
INDEED. MY CONVERSATIONS WITH MY COMPANION CUT ME TO THE BONE.
IT'S MORE ADVANTAGEOUS TO EXPLOIT THIS WEAKNESS THAN IT IS TO PROTECT YOU.

THERE'S NO LONGER MUCH DOUBT.

...WAS A NARWHAL.

WHAT THE NORTH-SIDE FISHERMEN BROUGHT IN FROM THE OCEAN...

DON'T WORRY. HE'S NOT SUCH CHEAP HELP THAT HE'D EAVESDROP ON ME.

GATA (CLATTER)

A NAR —!

A NARWHAL? AS IN THE IMMORTAL SORT?

YES. A HORNED SEA MONSTER.

...EVEN THOUGH THEY DID THIS TO ME.

THE PEOPLE WHO LOCKED ME UP HERE ARE TERRIFIED I'LL GET ANGRY...

I'D HEARD THAT WITHOUT FREEZING WATER THEY DIE, SO HOW WOULD ONE MAKE IT THIS FAR SOUTH?

EATING ITS FLESH BRINGS LONGEVITY, AND ITS POWDERED HORN CURES ALL DISEASES.

THOUGH THIS IS THE FIRST TIME I'VE HEARD OF IT HAPPENING WITH A NARWHAL.

ACCORDING TO THE SAILORS, DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY OF THE WEATHER, FISH AND OTHER CREATURES CAN BE DRIVEN SOUTH.

AND IF IT GOES BADLY, THERE WOULD BE WAR.

THE SOUTH SIDE WANTS TO MAINTAIN THEIR CONTROL, SO THEY'LL DO ANYTHING TO STAY ON EQUAL FOOTING.

YES.

THE NORTH SIDE BELIEVES THEY CAN TURN EVERYTHING AROUND.

IF THEY SELL THE NARWHAL, THEY'LL HAVE MONEY TO PAY THEIR DEBTS AND MORE.

.....BUT SURELY THAT DOESN'T MEAN...

THEY'LL STEAL IT, THEN SELL IT. TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE.

SO THE SOUTH CAN'T LET THEM HAVE IT, NO MATTER THE COST.

SO WILL YOU DO IT?

...NO, WAIT.

THAT'S WHY THEY TOOK IT TO THE CHURCH. TO AVOID HAVING IT TAKEN BY FORCE OF ARMS.

...DON'T YOU THINK SOMETHING INCREDIBLE AWAITS YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE?

—IF YOU CAN SLIP THROUGH THIS PASSAGE...

SHE'S RIGHT.

WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO CONVINCE YOU TO DO IT?

—CAN I GIVE YOU MY ANSWER TOMORROW?

HMM.

...SO I'M SURE YOU NOTICED THAT REYNOLDS IS QUITE SERIOUS ABOUT IT.

YOU'VE GOOD INSTINCTS ...

AND THAT HE WANTS MY HELP.

GATA (CLATTER)

THE FORBIDDEN BOOK, WAS IT?

NOT AT ALL. I'M PLEASED MY GUESS WAS RIGHT.

ARE YOU ANGRY?

YOU KNEW, AND YOU STILL WROTE ME THAT LETTER ...

IGOSO (RUMMAGE)

GOSO

GATA

THERE AREN'T MANY IN THE NORTH WHO CAN AFFORD WOOD FOR THEIR FIREPLACES. MOST BURN PEAT.

GARA (RATTLE)

BOU (WHOOSH)

KUH!

KUH!

THAT LAD WILL BE POPULAR NO MATTER WHERE HE GOES.

AND YET I HEAR THERE'S MORE CHARITY ON THIS SIDE.

I'M SURE IT IS.

IT'S QUITE AN OPPORTUNITY, I FEEL.

SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?

.....

HE'S A GREAT MERCHANT.

DID YOU SEE KIEMAN?

SO?

HOW WERE YOU TREATED AT THE GUILD HOUSE?

SO WHY DO YOU MENTION MR. KIEMAN?

AND HE'S THE ONE.

OH, INDEED. THERE'S A GIFTED TRADER IN EVERY GUILD.

CAN'T BLAME ME FOR FEELING THREATENED, EH?

AND HE'S BEEN CHASING ME OBSESSIVELY.

HE'S NOT ONE TO BE TRIFLED WITH.

ANYWAY, HE'S FORMIDABLE, NO QUESTION.

QUITE...

...HEY.

IF IT COMES DOWN TO THAT, WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO DROPPING THE GUILD?

HE'S BURNED ME SEVERAL TIMES OVER.

WHERE WOULD A MERCHANT WHO'D LEFT HIS GUILD GO?

YOU SHOULD COME WORK FOR ME.

I'M LOCKED UP IN HERE ON THE ORDERS OF THE MAN WHO GAVE ME THIS WOUND.

HE'S THE GRANDSON OF ONE OF THE LANDOWNERS WHO ORIGINALLY SIGNED THE DELTA MARKETPLACE CONTRACTS.

AND HE HOLDS THEM ABOUT AS DEARLY AS I DO.

HE'S TWO YEARS YOUNGER THAN ME, BUT HIS WITS AND DRIVE FOR WEALTH ARE ABOUT THE SAME AS MINE.

TALKS WITH A STRAIGHT FACE OF GETTING THE NARWHAL AND USING THE MONEY TO HEAD SOUTH AND FOUND A GREAT TRADING COMPANY.

HE DREAMS OF GETTING OUT OF THIS TOWN.

THEN HIT ME AND GRABBED MY SHOULDER.

"WITH YOU, I COULD OUTWIT THE OLD MEN!" HE YELLED.

I MUST TURN ON HIM, MUSTN'T I?

フゥ

WHEW.

GOTO (TNK)

ゴト…

SO I'LL ASK YOU ONE MORE TIME, KRAFT LAWRENCE.

WILL YOU COME WORK FOR ME?

Special Thanks !!
MR. ITTOUHEI OKAMOTO, MR. TENTSU TOI, MR. YAKKUN, MR. N-TA, MR. A.

**To be continued in Volume 10...**

I turn around, and suddenly we're at Volume 9! Koume-san's Eve is so clever and surprisingly adorable that she makes my heart beat faster! I can't take my eyes off the story. Hang in there!

支倉凍砂

ISUNA HASEKURA

SPICE & WOLF



Congratulations on Volume 9 going on sale! Now that Eve's finally shown up, I'm more sucked into the story than ever before. I can't wait to see how the manga version of the story takes shape.

JYUU AYAKURA

# SPICE & WOLF 9

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This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

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